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ILLUSTRATED
BIBLE HISTORY

OF THE
OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT

FOR
JUNIOR CLASSES

BY
THE LORETO NUNS

2nd Edition.



PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY A. ROME
AT THE CATHOLIC ORPHAN PRESS
3-4 PORTUGUESE CHURCH STREET
CALCUTTA

1921.

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CHAPTER I

• THE CREATION. THE FIRST SIN.

Genesis, 1, 2, 3.

God first created Heaven and a very great number of Angels, but one of them called Lucifer rebelled against God and some others followed him and they were sent to hell and became the evil spirits known as devils. God then created human beings but He first prepared a beautiful home for them.



He made light, and then the earth and sea, then trees and fruit and flowers, and then the sun, moon, and stars to give light by day and night. Next He created living beings, the fish in the waters, the birds of the air, and beasts and insects. Last of all He made man.

Paradise, or the Garden of Eden, the most beautiful part of the earth, was the home God chose for Adam the first man, and Eve the first woman. All other creatures were made for them but they were made for God. They alone were given immortal souls and if they loved and served God faithfully for some time on earth they were to go to Heaven without dying.

Only one command was laid upon them. They were not to eat the fruit of "The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil." The devil who wished then as he wishes now to drag souls down to hell tempted them to disobey God who had been so good to them. The evil spirit took the form of a serpent and came to Eve who was near the tree and asked her why she did not eat its fruit. When she said that God had forbidden them to eat that fruit and had warned them that if they disobeyed they would be punished with death, Satan answered they would not die but become like God knowing all things. Eve believed him and doubted the truth of what God had said. She took the fruit, ate it, and gave some to Adam who also did eat.

CHAPTER II

THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN.

Genesis, 3, 4.

At first Adam and Eve tried to hide from God, and when He called them before Him they blamed each other for the sin they had committed. God cursed the serpent and said a woman would crush its head. This woman was our Lady who through her Son, our Saviour, crushed the power of Satan.



Adam and Eve were turned out of Paradise and were condemned to labour, sickness, sorrow, and lastly to death by the words: "Dust thou art and into dust thou shalt return." This sin of our first parents is called original sin. Everyone has this guilt on his soul until he is baptised. Only Our Lady never had the slightest stain of any sin on her soul.

Original sin did such harm to man that he no longer found it easy to serve God but had to fight against an inclination to do many wrong things. Adam and Eve had the misery of seeing the effects of sin of their eldest son, Cain. Adam had two sons, Cain and Abel. Cain was a husbandman and offered to God the fruits of the earth, Abel who was a shepherd offered the best of his flocks. God blessed Abel and received his sacrifice with pleasure because it was given from his heart and Cain became jealous.

By degrees he felt such hatred for his brother that one day when they were alone in a field he fell upon him and killed him.



Cain was then marked by God as a murderer and he fled away and became a wanderer and knew no peace or rest for Abel's blood was crying to Heaven for vengeance. In place of Abel God gave Adam and Eve another good son named Seth.

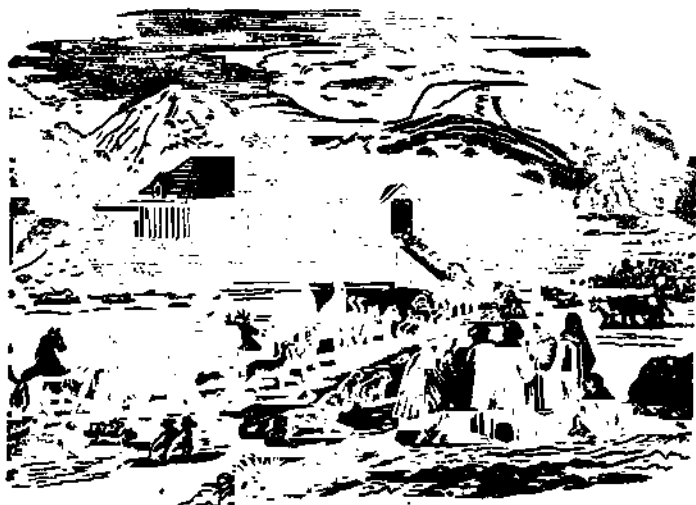
CHAPTER III

THE DELUGE. THE TOWER OF BABEL.

Gen., 6—11.

Men by degrees become very wicked, and more than a thousand years after the Creation God sent the Deluge to punish them for their many and great sins.

In all the world there was only one good family, Noe, his wife, his three sons, and their wives. God made known to Noe that He was going to drown the world and He ordered him to make an ark to save himself and his family and two of each kind of living creatures. The ark was an immense three storeyed ship with little rooms and a door and window. When it was ready Noe and his family entered it and all the animals went into the lower part. Noe was ordered to take in food for all.



Then the oceans and seas flooded the land and the rain fell in torrents for forty days and forty nights without stopping and the waters rose far above the highest mountains, but the ark floated peacefully on the waves. A hundred and fifty days passed and then a wind arose and the waters began to go down. In the tenth month the tops of the mountains appeared and Noe opened the window and sent out a raven

and a dove. The dove returned to the ark and after seven days Noe sent her out again. This time she came back with an olive branch in her beak.



Soon after Noe and all who were with him went out of the ark and Noe built an altar and offered a sacrifice of thanksgiving. Then God promised He would never again destroy the world by water and as a pledge of His promise He put a rainbow in the sky.

The descendants of Sem, Cham, and Japheth, the three sons of Noe, soon became numerous and made up their minds to separate. They said: "Let us first make a tower the top of which may reach to heaven and make our name famous." God punished their pride and the builders began to speak different languages and as they could not understand each other, they could not finish the tower. It was called "The Tower of Babel" which word means confusion.

CHAPTER IV

ABRAHAM'S CALL AND SACRIFICE.

Gen., 12—13.

Abraham was descended from Sem, Noe's eldest son, and was called by God to be the Patriarch, or Father of His chosen people, the Jews. He with his wife, Sara, left his home to go to the land God would show him. This was the "Promised Land." Abraham had a son called Isaac whom he loved very much, yet God commanded him to offer up this only son as a sacrifice.

Abraham took Isaac up to a mountain and on the way Isaac said :

"Father, behold fire and a sword, but where is the victim for the sacrifice?"

Abraham answered: "God will himself provide a victim, my son." Then he

built an altar and put the wood on it, bound Isaac and laid him on the wood, and lifting

his sword was about to kill him when an Angel called : "Abraham." And he said : "Here I am." Then the Angel said : "Lay not thy hand upon the boy. Now I know thou fearest God for thou hast not spared thy only son." Then Abraham saw a ram caught by the horns among some briars and this he sacrificed instead of his son.



Isaac carrying the wood up the mountain is a figure or Our Lord Jesus Christ carrying His Cross. Abraham was not required to sacrifice Isaac, but for love of us the Eternal Father did not spare His only Son.

Before Abraham left the mountain the Angel repeated the promises God had made him, the greatest of which was that the Redeemer should be descended from him. When Isaac was grown up his mother, Sara, died and soon after Isaac married Rebecca and had two sons, Jacob and Esau. Jacob became the Patriarch or head of the family and had twelve sons, the youngest of whom were Joseph and Benjamin.

CHAPTER V

THE HISTORY OF JOSEPH.

Genesis, 37.

Joseph was the best loved of Jacob's sons and therefore envied by his ten elder brothers. His wonderful dreams made them fear he would become their lord and master. He told them he dreamed they were binding sheaves of corn and his sheaf stood erect and theirs bowed down to it. Another night he dreamed that the sun, moon and eleven stars worshipped him, and Jacob thought that he, his wife, and eleven sons were some day to bow down before Joseph. His brothers were very angry at these dreams.

One day his brothers went with their flocks to a distant field and when they saw Joseph coming towards them they said: "Behold the dreamer cometh, let us kill him."

Reuben said not to kill him because he was their brother, but to put him into a deep pit and leave him there. He meant to come back and save him. They did as he wished and then sat down to dine. Some merchants going to Egypt passed that way and Juda said it would be a good thing to sell Joseph to them. He was taken out of the pit and sold for twenty pieces of silver. Then the brothers took his coat of many colours, dipped it in the blood of a kid and sent it to Jacob. The poor father knew the coat and mourned and wept thinking that his son had been killed by a wild beast.



The merchants took Joseph to Egypt and sold him to the chief captain in Pharaoh's army. Joseph pleased his master so much that he was put in charge of the whole household. The mistress of the house however turned her husband against him

and had him put in prison. There too he made many friends, among them the chief butler and baker of the King. He interpreted their dreams, that is he explained what they meant and his words came true. The butler was set free and returned to the palace and the baker was hanged. Joseph asked the butler to try and get him out of prison.

CHAPTER VI

PHARAOH'S DREAMS.

Gen., 41.

Two years later Pharaoh had a very strange dream which none of the wise men of Egypt could interpret. Then the butler thought of Joseph and told the king what had happened in prison. Joseph was sent for and when he arrived Pharaoh related his dream and asked for an explanation. He dreamed he was on the banks of the Nile and saw seven fat, strong kine, or cows come out of the river and after them seven very sickly animals which ate up the others. The king awoke but fell asleep again and dreamed that he saw seven full, ripe ears of corn growing on one stalk and then there sprang up seven thin, blasted ones, which destroyed the beauty of the former. Joseph said he would with God's help explain these dreams. Both meant that there would be seven years of plenty followed by seven years of so severe a famine that the days of plenty would be forgotten, and his dreaming it twice showed that it would happen at once. He advised

Pharaoh to appoint a careful, wise man to make big barns and store away the corn during the years of plenty so that the people might have food when the famine came upon them.



The king thought he would never find a wiser man than Joseph, so he appointed him Governor of Egypt. The barns were built and corn stored up during the time of abundance, then the famine came. Very soon the poor were in great want and the king said to them : "Go to Joseph." And Joseph opened the barns and sold the corn. Soon the famine spread to other lands and Jacob sent his sons to Egypt to buy corn, but Benjamin he kept at home.

The ten brothers entered the Governor's house and bowed low before him. They did not dream

that it was Joseph whom they were treating with such respect, but he knew them, yet he spoke to them harshly pretending he thought them spies.

CHAPTER VII

JOSEPH MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN.

Gen., 45.

Joseph asked his brothers many questions and was told that they were shepherds and had left their old father and youngest brother in Canaan. Joseph said he would keep one of them in Egypt till they returned with the youngest brother. Then he ordered their sacks to be filled with corn and sent them away. When they reached home they told their father all that the Governor had said, but he refused to let Benjamin go.

However when all the corn they had was eaten he was forced to give in as his sons said it was useless for them to go without Benjamin. Joseph was delighted to see his favourite brother but he did not show his feelings. He had their sacks filled with corn and into Benjamin's he told his servant to put his own silver cup. They had gone a short distance when they were overtaken and accused of stealing the cup. They all denied it, but when Benjamin's sack was opened the cup was found. He and his brothers returned in fear and grief to Joseph's palace and throwing themselves at his feet declared they were his servants for life.

He said he would keep only the one who had stolen the cup, that the rest might go home. Then they said to each other that they deserved this punishment for the way they had long ago treated their brother. They did not know that Joseph could understand their language as he had spoken to them through an interpreter.

He could not bear to see them in such sorrow, so sending everyone else out of the room he turned to his brothers and cried : " I am your brother, Joseph, fear not, God has raised me up to save you."

And throwing his arms round Benjamin he kissed him. Then he said that Pharaoh had given him land on which his father and all his relatives could make their homes. Jacob was sent for and for many years the Israelites lived in Egypt.



CHAPTER VIII

THE HISTORY OF MOSES.

Exodus, 2.

When Jacob came to Egypt he brought his sons and their families, in all seventy persons, but God

blessed them in every way and they became so numerous and powerful that the Kings of Egypt began to fear them. At last one of them ordered all the Jewish baby boys to be thrown into the river. A woman with the hope of saving her child put him in a basket which she placed in the long grass by the riverside.

The king's daughter happened to go to that



very place and seeing the basket had it brought to her. When she saw the baby in it she said she would adopt him and call him Moses, that is, "saved from the waters." The child's sister was close by and now came forward and offered to bring a nurse. She ran and

called her mother to whose care the baby was given. As he grew up his mother taught him about the true God.

The King was angry with him for taking the part of the Israelites and he had to leave Egypt. He then became a shepherd.

One day when out with his flocks he saw a bush on fire yet not being burnt. He went closer to look at the wonder when he was stopped by a voice saying: "The place thou standest on is holy ground. I am the God of thy fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."



God then told Moses he was to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. Moses begged not to be sent as he was afraid, but God promised him he would have the power of working miracles and that his brother Aaron would go with him. He then ordered Moses to cast his rod on the ground and it became a serpent, then to take it up by the tail and it turned into a rod again. Yet Moses hesitated and said the Israelites would want to know the name of the God that sent him, and God said : "I am Who am."

CHAPTER IX

THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT.

Exodus, 7.

Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and asked him to let the Israelites go into the desert to offer

sacrifice to God. The King was very angry and said they would not go but would be made to work harder than before. Then Moses warned him that God would punish him and his people.



Aaron threw his rod on the ground and it turned into a serpent. Pharaoh's magicians did the same but Aaron's serpent ate theirs up.

Then God sent ten terrible plagues.

1. All the water in Egypt was changed into blood and remained so for seven days.

2. Frogs swarmed over the land entering even the rooms and beds, the ovens and dishes of food.

3. All the dust in the land changed into small flying insects called sciniphs.

4. A plague of flies corrupted everything on which they rested.

5. A disease among the cattle killed all the beasts.

6. Men were covered with boils and swelling sores.

7. A terrible hail-storm broke down the trees.

8. A burning wind blew for a day and a night and brought a flight of locusts which destroyed the fruit throughout the land.

9. There was a three days' darkness so intense that people hardly dared to move from where they were when it came on.

10. In one night the eldest son in each family died.

Only the Egyptians suffered from the plagues, the Israelites were not troubled by them.

While each plague lasted Pharaoh begged of Moses to pray to God to remove it, but when the prayer was heard he again refused to let the Israelites go. Then God sent the terrible tenth plague.

CHAPTER X

THE PASCHAL LAMB. THE CROSSING OF THE RED SEA.

Exodus, 13.

Before sending the tenth plague God commanded the Israelites to kill a lamb and mark the door posts of their houses with its blood as the destroying Angel would pass at midnight over the land and enter every house not marked with blood and kill the

eldest son of each family. The blood which saved the Israelites is a figure of the Precious Blood which would save our souls.



One lamb was to be eaten in each house. All were to stand and eat in haste, they were to be dressed ready for a journey as they would leave Egypt that night. In memory of this happy event the Jews were every year to keep the feast of the Pasch, or Passover, and eat the Paschal lamb just as they had done when leaving Egypt. At midnight a great cry of terror and mourning rose throughout the land. There was a death in every house from the eldest son of Pharaoh to the eldest son of the lowest of his subjects. Then the Egyptians urged the Israelites to leave their country ; they let them

take what they wanted, and gave them food, clothing, rich stuffs, gold, silver, and beautiful ornaments. Jacob had brought seventy Israelites into Egypt, Moses led out of it six hundred thousand not counting the children. The Israelites went through the desert to the Red Sea. A pillar of cloud showed the way by day and a pillar of fire by night.



When Pharaoh had got over his terror he was sorry he had allowed the Israelites to go and he sent an army after them. God commanded Moses to stretch his rod over the sea and the waters divided leaving a dry passage which the Israelites crossed in safety, but when Pharaoh's army was half way through the waters flowed back over them and they were all drowned.

CHAPTER XI

MIRACLES IN THE DESERT. LAW GIVEN ON MOUNT SINAI.

Exodus, 16—20.

God worked great wonders in the desert, supplying the Israelites with food and drink in a wonderful manner. Every morning the ground was covered with a bread from Heaven, white as hoar-frost and delicious to the taste. The people called it "Manna" which means "What is this?" When they wanted flesh to eat a number of quails settled on the ground and were easily caught. Water flowed from the rock when Moses struck it with his rod. Once they came across bitter water which Moses sweetened by throwing

some wood into it. Yet the ungrateful people often murmured against Moses.

Three months after they left Egypt they came to the foot of Mount Sinai. There they encamped and prepared to receive the Law of God or the Ten Commandments. After three days they gathered round the Mount and all were filled with fear and reverence.

A cloud covered the top of the mount, lightning flashed and thunder rolled and Angels sounded exceedingly loud trumpets. The people were terrified and said to Moses : " Speak thou to us and we will hear, let not the Lord speak to us lest we die." And Moses said : " God has come to you that the fear of Him may be in you that you may not sin." Moses went up into the dark cloud where God was and stayed there forty days and forty nights.



God gave him the Ten Commandments engraved on two tables of stone, explained to him the Jewish

law and religion, told him how sacrifices were to be offered and who were to be priests, and ordered him to make the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant.

CHAPTER XII

THE GOLDEN CALF.

Exodus, 32.

The people grew tired of waiting for Moses to return so they got round Aaron and asked him to make them a god. He weakly yielded to their wish and told them to bring him some gold. They took bracelets and rings from their wives and daughters and brought them to Aaron who melted down the ornaments and then made the gold into the shape of a calf. It was put on an altar and the people offered sacrifice to it and kept a feast. When Moses came down from the mountain he found the Israelites singing and dancing round the altar with the golden calf on it. He was so angry that he threw down the two stone tables and broke them. After this he took the calf and beat it to powder. God punished many of the Israelites with death but at the prayer of Moses pardoned the rest.

Moses was ordered to make two other tables like the ones he had broken and to take them up to the mountain. He again received the Ten Commandments and when he came down a second time he read the law of God to the people and told them what God had ordered about their religious ceremonies and sacrifices. The people all cried out : "All that the Lord has commanded we will do." And they brought rich stuffs, fine linen, gold and silver and

precious stones for the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant. Aaron was made the first High Priest and his sons and the eldest son of each family were made priests. This was because they were spared in the tenth plague in Egypt. Later on instead of eldest sons the whole tribe of the Levites was set apart for the service of God and parents had only to present the eldest son in the Temple and offer a sacrifice.

CHAPTER XIII

THE TABERNACLE AND THE ARK OF THE COVENANT.

Exodus, 25, 26.

"The people shall make Me a sanctuary and I shall dwell in the midst of them." These words were said by God to Moses when ordering him to build the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant.

The Tabernacle was their Church, but as the Israelites were on their way to the Promised Land their Church had to be a sort of tent which they could carry about with them. The hangings were of rich stuff, the pillars of cedar wood covered with gold and set in silver sockets. One part of the Tabernacle, separated from the rest by a beautiful veil, was called the Holy of Holies and only the High Priest was allowed to enter it. In it were the Ark of the Covenant, a golden pot with manna, and the rod of Aaron which had blossomed.

The Ark was of cedar wood overlaid inside and outside with pure gold and there was a crown of gold on it. Inside the Ark were the two stone tablets on which the Ten Commandments had been

written on Mount Sinai. Over it were two Angels with outspread wings and between them the Oracle, or mercy seat. At times a cloud covered the Oracle and a voice was heard to make known God's will to the High Priest and through him to the people, or to answer a prayer or some question, for God often spoke to the chosen people through His Angels. At the four corners of the Ark were gold rings through which were passed bars of wood covered with gold to enable the Levites to carry it.



Outside the Holy of Holies was the Sanctuary where the priests offered prayers and incense and where seven lamps were always kept burning. Great reverence was required of the people. How

much more should we show in our Churches. Their Holy of Holies was only a shadow of ours. We should gladly give all that is richest and best and most beautiful to our Churches and Altars.

CHAPTER XIV

PATRIARCHS, PROPHETS, JUDGES, AND KINGS.

SAMUEL.

The Israelites were at first governed by the Patriarch or head of the family. Abraham was called by God to be the Father of His Chosen People. God then sent Moses, the great Prophet and wonder-worker, to guide His people to the Promised Land. For forty days God spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai and taught him all he had to do and this holy, wise man ruled the Israelites for forty years until he brought them to the Holy Land. He saw it from a distance but died before the Israelites entered it.

He was succeeded by Josue who led the people into the land and divided it among the twelve tribes named after the twelve sons of Jacob. After Josue's death the Israelites were governed by Judges who ruled in the name of God, the true Lord, Master, and King. But the people wanted an earthly king like other nations and later on God gave them their wish. He sent many Prophets to teach them and one of these named Samuel had served God from his childhood in the Temple. When quite young he one night heard a voice calling him by name. He got up and went to the High Priest to find out what he wanted. The Priest said he had not called him. This happened three times and then the High

Priest told him to say if he were called again : " Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth. " The voice called again and told Samuel to warn the High Priest Heli that he would be punished for allowing his sons to continue in their wickedness, that the Israelites would be defeated in battle, his sons killed, and the Ark of the Covenant carried off by the enemy. All this came to pass.

CHAPTER XV

THE KINGS SAUL AND DAVID.

Samuel was both Prophet and Judge. He governed the people till he was very old and then they wanted a king. Samuel was not pleased at this and he prayed to know God's will. And God said : " They have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me that I should not reign over them. " Yet He told Samuel He would give them their wish though they would be sorry for it as a king would be hard on them.

That day a young man named Saul came to consult the Prophet, and God made known to Samuel that Saul was to be the first King of Israel. Later on lots were cast and the lot fell on Saul and he was anointed king. When the people saw how tall and strong he was they cried : " God save the King ! " Saul ruled well for some time and fought much with the Philistines.

His son, Jonathan, had a dear friend, a shepherd boy named David. The two friends fought side by side and David was so brave and won so many victories that Saul grew jealous of him and tried to get rid of him.



One day Saul disobeyed an order given by God and he was cast off by God and he and his sons were killed in battle. David then became king. He wished very much to build a Temple to God for he was sad and ashamed to think that whilst he lived in a palace God's House was only a tent. But God sent a Prophet to tell him that the Temple was to be built by his son, Solomon, who would have a peaceful reign.

David could only bring back the Ark of the Covenant and place it in the Tabernacle, and gather gold and silver and the materials for the building of the Temple.

CHAPTER XVI

THE TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM. SOLOMON'S PRAYER.

We read much in the Bible of the Temple of Jerusalem. This grand building was the pride and

joy of every Jew. Three times a year every man amongst them had to go to the Temple for the great feasts. The Temple was made up of the Holy of Holies, the Sanctuary for the priests, and the inner and outer courts for the people. There were beautiful ornaments of gold and silver and the floor was of marble. In the Holy of Holies every thing, even the floor, was covered with gold, the walls had angels and flowers carved on them and there were two angels standing with their wings stretched out and so placed that the Ark could be put between them while their wings met over the Oracle.



When all was ready for the opening of the Temple the King with the princes of the tribes in all their splendour went with the priests dressed in rich vestments to bring the Ark from the Tabernacle. It was carried by the Levites, and musicians

went with them singing to the accompaniment of harps and cymbals and trumpets, while all the people followed in procession to the Temple. There the Ark was placed in the Holy of Holies where a cloud covered it and the majesty of God filled the Temple and all fell on their faces adorning and praising God.

Whilst Solomon was praying God asked him what reward he would like in return for building such a beautiful Temple for the service of God, and Solomon said : " Give me wisdom and knowledge." God was so pleased with his prayer that He promised him these gifts and said He would add to them riches and power and glory and blessings through life if Solomon remained faithful to Him.

CHAPTER XVII

THE KINGDOMS OF JUDA AND ISRAEL.

THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY.

Solomon was succeeded by his son Roboam whose harshness drove ten of the tribes into rebellion. Only Juda and Benjamin remained faithful to him. The rest chose Jeroboam, the Captain of the King's army, for their king. The two tribes were called Jews and the others Israelites.

The ten set up the kingdom of Israel at a distance and no longer went to the Temple of Jerusalem, not even for the great feasts. After a short time they built altars to false gods and fell into idolatry. Most of their kings were wicked and the Jews too were often unfaithful to the promises they had made to God. At last the King of Babylon invaded their land, took all the gold and silver and

treasures from the Temple, destroyed it and the King's palace, set fire to the city and carried off many prisoners to Babylon. Among the captives were three pious young men, who when the King set up a golden statue and gave orders that at the sound of the music for the sacrifice all were to fall down and adore it refused to commit idolatry. They were thrown into a burning furnace but an Angel was seen driving aside the flames and the three young men came out unhurt. Then the King declared that all should respect the God of the Jews.

A little later the King had a dream which when he awoke he could not remember. He gave orders that the wise men who studied the stars were to tell him his dream and explain its meaning and declared that if they did not they would be put to death. God made known the dream to the Prophet Daniel who related and explained to the astonished King. Daniel and the three young men became great favourites at court.

CHAPTER XVIII

BALTASSAR'S FEAST.

The next king of Babylon was Baltassar. He gave a great feast to his nobles and ordered the sacred vessels of gold and silver which had been brought from the Temple of Jerusalem to be used as wine-cups. As the gay, laughing party was drinking out of these cups a hand appeared on the wall and wrote three mysterious words on it. The laughter ceased, the merry-making stopped, and the terrified King sent for wise men and magicians to explain the writing but none of them could make out what the words meant.

Then the Queen entered the hall and asked the King why he did not send for Daniel who had received great wisdom and knowledge from God and had explained the late King's dreams.

Daniel was sent for and was promised a great reward if he could tell the King the meaning of the words. He replied he wanted no gifts, that of himself he could do nothing, but that with God's help he would explain the writing on the wall. He reminded Baltassar how severely God had punished those who sinned and yet the impious King had dared to use the sacred vessels as wine-cups and to drink out of them to the honour of his idols. Then he read and explained the words.

1. Mane. God has numbered thy kingdom and has finished it.

2. Thecel. Thou art weighed in the balance and art found wanting.

3. Phares. Thy kingdom is divided and is given to the Medes and Persians.

That very night the kings of those two nations attacked Babylon and took it, Baltassar was slain and Darius, the Mede, became King of Babylon.

CHAPTER XIX

THE LIONS' DEN. RETURN TO JUDEA. THE TEMPLE REBUILT.

Daniel, 7. 14

The new Kings bestowed many favours on Daniel and this roused the jealousy of the nobles. They could not accuse Daniel of any act against the laws of the land so they tried to get him into trouble

about his religion. They persuaded the king to punish him for not praying according to the royal order. The King yielded to them and Daniel was thrown into a lions' den. After seven days the King went to the den and was astonished and delighted to find Daniel alive. The Prophet called out : " O King, live for ever ! My God has sent His Angel to shut up the mouths of the lions and they have not hurt me. "

Then the King commanded Daniel to be taken out of the den and those who had accused him to be thrown in. These had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions got hold of them and broke their bones to pieces.

After seventy years of captivity the Jews were allowed to return to Judea and to rebuild the Temple. The new one was not nearly so beautiful or grand as the old, and those aged men who had seen Solomon's Temple wept aloud while the young men shouted for joy.

A Prophet was sent to say to the Jews : " Great shall be the glory of this last House more than of the first. In this place I will give peace. The desired of all nations shall come and I will fill this place with glory. " (Aggeus Ch. II).

These words were fulfilled when Our Lord was presented in the Temple by His holy Mother and every time He entered it during His life.

CHAPTER XX

JUDEA BECOMES A ROMAN PROVINCE.

It was about five hundred years before the birth of Christ that the Jews returned to Jerusalem and

built the second Temple. They were governed by the High priest but were subject to the Kings of Persia.

A very powerful Persian king was so struck by the virtue and beauty of a Jewish maiden named Esther that he made her his queen. God raised her to this high position in order to save the Jews from the hatred and cruelty of a powerful noble who tried to make the king give an order that they should be put to death.

Esther pleaded with the King and the Jews were spared. Some time after one of the Kings of Persia began a fierce religious persecution. He took Jerusalem, plundered the Temple, and put many Jews to death. Among them were the Machabees, a mother and her seven sons. The mother saw her sons killed one by one and after the death of the youngest she herself received the martyr's crown.



The office of High Priest continued in the family of the Machabees for many years and they ruled the people well. Three of them Judas, Simon, and Jonathan led the Jews to battle against the Persians and Greeks and won glorious victories by the help of God.

The Romans were at this time the most powerful nation in the world and the Jews entered into an alliance with them and became subject to the Roman Empire. When Julius Caesar was killed Augustus became Emperor of Rome and he made Herod King of Judea. The whole world was at peace and those who loved God were anxiously waiting for the Messiah for Daniel had clearly foretold the coming of Christ, the true Prince of Peace.



CHAPTER I

THE COMING OF THE REDEEMER.

Four thousand years had passed since God promised Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden that He would send a Saviour. The Jews, God's chosen people, had been so wicked and ungrateful that God had punished them by letting the Romans conquer them.

They were very unhappy under a heathen Emperor and hoped that the Saviour would soon come. But they wanted Him to be a great King who would lead them to battle and drive the Romans out of the country, and make the Jews the greatest nation in the world.

They knew that the Scriptures said He would be of the royal family of David and that His kingdom would last for ever, so they hoped to be very rich and powerful. They forgot that the Scriptures also said that he would be a Man of Sorrows, that He would be led to death like a lamb, and that He was coming to suffer and die for our sins.

There were others who understood God's ways better. First of all Our Blessed Lady and St. Joseph who were then living in a poor little house at Nazareth. Then there were St. Elizabeth and Zachary, the parents of St. John the Baptist, and a holy old man named Simeon who had received a promise that he would before his death see the

Saviour. We must be like these holy persons ready to receive Our Lord who came to redeem us and to show us the way to Heaven.

As our Catechism teaches us our Religion and tells us how we should practise it, so in the Gospel we are taught the Life of Our Lord and learn to know and love Him, and to follow His example. We should never study these lessons without first saying a prayer from our hearts that we may understand them and do what they teach us.

CHAPTER II

THE ANNUNCIATION AND THE VISITATION.

Luke, 1.

The Angel Gabriel was sent by God to the Blessed Virgin at Nazareth and said to her : " Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women." He then told her that she was to be the Mother of God, and that her Son would be named Jesus which means Saviour. And Mary answered : " Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word." The feast of the Annunciation is kept on the 25th of March.

Soon after Mary went to visit her cousin, St. Elizabeth. As she entered the house St. Elizabeth cried out : " Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me that the Mother of my Lord should come to me ? "

When Mary saw that God had made known her greatness to St. Elizabeth she answered in a



beautiful canticle of which the first words are : " My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. " Then she added : " Behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. " How true this is ! Millions of

Catholics daily call her blessed when they say the Hail Mary.

The 2nd of July is the feast of Our Lady's Visitation. About this time St. John the Baptist was born. He was chosen to be the precursor of Our Lord, that is he had to prepare people for the coming of the Saviour. While still very young he left his father's house and went to live in the desert where he prayed much and did great penance.

CHAPTER III

THE NATIVITY. THE SHEPHERDS AT THE CRIB.

Luke, 2.

The Roman Emperor gave an order that everyone should go to his family place and have his name written down. He wanted to know the number of his subjects. Mary and Joseph belonged to the family of King David, so they went to his city

Bethlehem. The place was crowded with visitors and such poor people could not find anyone to give them lodgings. There was no room for them even in the inn. At last they had to go to an open stable, and there Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the King of Heaven, the Saviour for whom men had been waiting all these four thousand years, was born. Mary wrapped the Divine Infant in some poor clothes she had and laid Him on the straw in the manger.

At midnight some shepherds who were watching their flocks on the hillside saw a glorious heavenly



light and an Angel appeared and said: "I bring you good tidings of great joy. This day is born to you a Saviour in the city of David. You shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger." And suddenly there was with the Angel a number of other Angels praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will."

When the Angels returned to Heaven the shepherds said "Let us go to Bethlehem." And they went with haste and they found Mary and Joseph, and the Infant lying in the manger. All wondered at the things told them by the shepherds, but they did not go to the stable because they would not believe in a Saviour poor and humble.

God loves the poor and simple. He sent an Angel to call them to the Crib. After Mary and Joseph the shepherds were the first to see God made man. He loves children too, for their sakes He became a little Child to teach them by His example to be holy.

CHAPTER IV

THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE.

Luke, 3.

THE STAR IN THE EAST.

Matt., 2.

After the crowd had left Jerusalem Mary and Joseph must have got a place in the city for they were still there when the Divine Child was more than a month old. The Jewish law required parents to take the eldest son when he was forty days old and present him to the Lord in the Temple.

Mary and Joseph obeyed the law in all things so they took Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem. There a holy old man named Simeon took the Child in his arms and said: "Now Thou dost dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word in peace because my eyes have seen Thy promised salvation."



Then he blessed them and told Mary that Jesus would be the light of the world, but that a sword would pierce her soul. He meant a sword of sorrow, and that happened on Calvary when she stood at the foot of the Cross.

The feast of Our Lord's Presentation and of Our Lady's Purification is kept on the 2nd February

Because Our Lord is the Light of the world everyone at Mass receives a blessed candle which is lighted during some parts of the Mass.

After the shepherds God called three Kings to the Crib of the child Jesus. They saw a wonderful star and followed it from a far country to Jerusalem. They had not the true religion but they were good men and God brought them to learn the truth. Thinking that the star meant that a great king was born they went to the palace in Jerusalem. King Herod was much troubled when he heard of the star but he pretended that he too wanted to find Jesus and adore Him. He called the Jewish priests and asked them where the Saviour would be born. They said in Bethlehem for they had read that in the Scriptures. Herod told the three Kings to go and look for the new king and to let him know when they had found him.

CHAPTER V

THE MAGI AT THE CRIB. THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

Matt., 2 .

When the three Kings left Jerusalem they saw the star again and followed it till it stood still. They entered the house over which it shone and found the Child with Mary, His Mother, and falling down they adored Him. Then opening their treasures they offered Him gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. They were warned in sleep by an Angel not to return

to Herod, so they went back another way to their own country.



Herod waited some time, but when he found that the kings did not return he was very angry. He sent soldiers to Bethlehem to kill all the baby boys up to the age of two. He hoped Jesus would be among them. He feared if this new King lived He would take his throne, and his pride and jealousy made him so cruel to the sorrowing mothers and innocent children.

These babies of Bethlehem are martyrs because they were killed for the sake of the Child Jesus. They are called the Holy Innocents and their feast is kept on the 28th December, three days after Christmas.

Our Lord was to die on the Cross when He was a man and Herod's cruelty could not touch Him. Some time before an Angel had come to St. Joseph

at night and told him to take the Child and His Mother and fly to Egypt.



Long ago Moses had brought the Israelites away from Egypt where they had suffered so much from the cruel king, Pharaoh. It must have been hard for Mary and Joseph to be sent to Egypt, but they always obeyed because they wished to do God's will. They lived in Egypt for some years and then the Angel came and told St. Joseph he could go back as Herod was dead.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph went to Judea, but hearing that Herod's son was now king they went to live in a far off little town named Nazareth. Therefor Our Lord is called in the Bible "Jesus of Nazareth."

CHAPTER VI

THE FINDING IN THE TEMPLE.

Luke, 2.

The Jews were obliged to go once a year to the Temple at Jerusalem. When Jesus was twelve years old He went with His parents to keep the great feast of the Pasch. When all the public prayers and sacrifices were over the Holy Family prepared to return to Nazareth.



It was the custom for the men to leave the city by one gate and the women by another, but the children were allowed to go with either the father or mother. A whole day passed before Mary and Joseph found out that Jesus had not come with either of them. They looked for Him among their friends and relations but could not find Him. Then they went back to Jerusalem.

With sad, anxious hearts they went about looking for Him for three days and at last found Him in the Temple sitting among others listening to the teachers and asking such questions that everyone wondered at His wisdom. When His Mother saw Him she said : "Son, why hast Thou done so to us ? Behold Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing." And Jesus said : "How is it that you sought me ? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business ?" He meant His Heavenly Father.

Our Lord did not mean to begin public teaching as yet, so He left the Temple with His parents and went with them to Nazareth where He lived till He was thirty years old. All that we read about Him during these eighteen years is that He was obedient to Mary and Joseph. Jesus by His example teaches all, and especially children, to obey those whom God has placed over them. Jesus must have worked in St. Joseph's workshop because later on the Jews spoke of Him as "the carpenter's Son."

CHAPTER VII

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

Matt., 3. Mark, 1. John, 1. Luke, 2.

A little before Jesus began teaching in public St. John the Baptist left the desert and preached in the country near the river Jordan. He told all to repent of their sins, to be charitable, and to prepare for the coming of Christ. Many thought St. John was Christ because he was so holy and because he

baptised the people, and they asked : " Why do you baptise if you be not Christ ? " But John said : " I baptise with water but He shall baptise with the Holy Ghost." St. John gave a baptism of penance and humility, not the Sacrament of Baptism which Christ was to institute later on.

One day he saw Jesus passing and said : " Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sins of the world." Then two of his disciples followed Jesus. In this way John taught others to know and love Our Lord. He told them that Jesus was greater than he, he even said he was not worthy to loose the latchet of Our Lord's shoe. As long as St. John lived he tried to get everyone to follow Our Lord, and Jesus said of him that he was a great Saint.

Our Lord and St. John were now thirty years old and another King Herod was reigning. He was as cruel as the king who had the babies of Bethlehem put to death, and he threw St. John into prison and after some time gave orders for his head to be cut off. St. John's disciples came and took the body and buried it and then went and told Jesus.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD. TEMPTATIONS.

Matt., 4.

When Jesus was about thirty He left His Blessed Mother's house and went about the cities of Judea

preaching the Gospel and working miracles. But before He began His public life He went to the Jordan to be baptised. As soon as St. John saw Him he cried out : "I ought to be baptised by Thee and comest Thou to me ?" Our Lord told him to baptise Him and the Baptist obeyed.

Then the Holy Ghost came down on Jesus in the form of a dove and a voice from Heaven was heard : "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."



After this Jesus went into the desert where He prayed and fasted for forty days. Then the devil dared to come and tempt Him. Knowing how Our Lord had fasted he said : "If thou be the Son of God command these stones

to be made bread." But Jesus answered that man lived not only on bread but on the word of God. Then the devil took Him to the top of the Temple and told Him to throw Himself down from that height and said that God would send Angels to prevent His being hurt. But Jesus answered : "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." A third time the devil tempted Him. He showed Him all the kingdoms of the earth and promised to give them all to Him if falling down Jesus would adore him. Then Our Lord turned on him and said : "Begone, Satan, the Lord thy God shalt thou adore and Him only shalt thou serve." Then the devil left Him and Angels came to Him.

So will it be with us. If we drive away the devil the Angels will stay with us.

CHAPTER IX

THE TWELVE APOSTLES.

Matt., 4. Mark, 1. Luke, 5. John, 1.

Our Lord chose twelve Apostles to help Him in His work of teaching the people. Almost all of them were poor fishermen, but God makes use of the poor and simple to do great things for Him. These twelve Apostles were Peter and Andrew, his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew, James, Jude, and Simon, and Judas Iscariot, the traitor.

St. Andrew and another disciple heard St. John the Baptist say : " Behold the Lamb of God " and they followed Jesus and stayed with Him all that day. The next day Andrew brought his brother, St. Peter.

Later on Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee and He saw James and John with their father. They were mending their fishing nets, and Jesus said : " Follow me. " They left their father and everything they had and remained with Jesus till death.

That same day He called Philip who was from the same city as Peter and Andrew. Philip went to his friend, Nathanael or Bartholomew, and told him that he had found Christ. Nathanael was slow to believe but Philip only said : " Come and see. "

Nathanael went and when he saw Jesus he gladly became one of His disciples. All these were from Galilee. They were good friends and helped each other to know and love Our Lord.

Matthew was rich, but as soon as Jesus called him he gave up all his money to the poor and went with Jesus. He was so happy to become His disciple that he gathered his friends together and gave a great feast.

The Apostles lived with Our Lord for three years. All except the traitor, Judas, loved Him faithfully. After the Ascension they preached the Gospel to the whole world and one after another suffered martyrdom for the love of Christ.

CHAPTER X

JESUS BLESSES LITTLE CHILDREN.

Matt., 19. Luke, 18.

When Jesus Christ was on earth He often showed special love for children. For their sakes He became a Child, to teach them by His example from their earliest years. He wishes all children to grow up good and innocent. He once said it would be better for a man to be drowned in the sea with a big stone tied round his neck than for him to give bad example to a child. He said "Their Angels see the face of my Father in Heaven," as if He meant to remind them that the Angels would complain to God of anyone who gave bad example to those under their care.



One day some pious mothers brought their children to Jesus for a blessing. The Apostles were annoyed with them because their master was tired out with the day's hard work. But Jesus was not pleased and said : " Suffer the little children to come unto Me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven. " Then embracing them He laid His hands on them and blessed them.

Another day the disciples wanted to know who was the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven and Jesus drew a little child to Him and said : " Unless you become like little children you shall not enter the kingdom of Heaven. " He meant we were to be humble and pure of heart as all children should be. How hard they should try and how much they should pray never to lose their baptismal innocence. Jesus will then love them as He loved St. John to whose care He left His holy Mother when He was hanging on the Cross. Then too He will say to Our Lady : " Behold thy children. "

CHAPTER XI

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT. THE BEATITUDES.

Matt., 5.



The first eight sentences of this Sermon are called the Beatitudes because they tell us who are really blessed.

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.

2. Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.

3. Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted.

4. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice for they shall have their fill.

5. Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.

6. Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God.

7. Blessed are the peace-makers for they shall be called the children of God.

8. Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.

Among the many beautiful lessons Jesus taught was one of confidence in God. He called our attention to the birds, they do not sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns, but God feeds them ; to the flowers : " Consider the lilies of the field, they toil not neither do they spin, yet not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these." He spoke of the very grass we walk on. If God takes care of these, how much more will He do for us, His children ?

We should not be too anxious about the things of this life for our Heavenly Father knows all we need.

" Seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice and all these things shall be added unto you."

Jesus then taught the disciples to say the " Our Father." We say this prayer so often, let us try to remember who it was that taught it.

CHAPTER XII

SOME OF OUR LORD'S WORDS.

Let us try and learn by heart some of Our Lord's own words as we find them in the four Gospels.

St. Matthew, 5, 11, 21.

Come to Me all you who labour and are burdened and I will refresh you.

Learn of Me because I am meek and humble of heart and you will find rest to your souls.

Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that persecute you, that you may be the children of your Father that is in Heaven.

My House is a house of prayer.

St. Mark, 10, 11, 15.

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me.

How hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of Heaven.

If you will not forgive, neither will your Father that is in Heaven forgive your sins.

Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation.

St. Luke, 6, 7, 15.

Judge not and you shall not be judged. Forgive and you shall be forgiven. Give and it shall be given to you.

Thy sins are forgiven. Go in peace.

There shall be joy before the Angels of God upon one sinner doing penance.

As you would that men should do to you, do you also to them in like manner.

St. John, 14, 16, 17.

I will see you again and your heart shall rejoice and your joy no man shall take from you.

Peace I leave to you, My peace I give to you, not as the world giveth do I give to you.

If you love Me keep My commandments.

Father, I will that where I am they also whom Thou hast given me may be with me that they may see my glory.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

Matt., 13. Mark, 4. Luke 8.

Jesus often spoke to the people in Parables, that is, He told them little stories to explain His teaching more clearly. We find more than twenty of these parables in the Bible. The one about the Sower must have struck the Apostles very much for it is related by three of the four who wrote the Gospels.

Our Lord said that the sower went out to sow seed and some fell by the wayside and the birds ate a part and the rest was trodden under foot ; some fell on the rock and when it sprang up it withered away for want of water ; some fell among thorns and as it grew the thorns choked it ; but some fell on good ground and brought forth fruit, thirty, sixty, and even a hundred fold.

Our Lord Himself explained this parable. The Sower is Jesus and the seed the word of God and the ground is each one's heart. Some hearts are like a public road. All sorts of thoughts, words, and actions pass through them and crush Religion out of their lives, and the devil, like a bird of prey, snatches away God's grace. Some are like rock. Nothing holy can grow in such hard hearts, they do not even pray for grace to soften them. Riches and a love for only the things of this world are like thorns that choke heavenly thoughts in many hearts. They seem to say to Jesus : " There is no room for Thee. "

But the good soil is like those who think more of their souls than of their bodies and seek first to

please God. Some are good and bear fruit thirty fold, some are better and bear sixty fold, some are saintly and give back to God a hundred fold.

CHAPTER XIV

THE LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD.

Matt., 20.

A householder went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard and agreed to give them a penny a day. A little later he engaged other men and promised to pay them what was just. Three hours later and then six hours later he got more men. Then when the day was almost done he said to some others: "Why stand you here all the day idle? Go you also into my vineyard." When evening came they were all paid and the last comers got a penny. Those who came in the early morning thought they would get more, but they were paid the promised penny and they murmured. The master reminded them that they had agreed to work for a penny so he had done them no wrong. Why should they find fault because he was good to others? Then Jesus added: "The last shall be first and the first shall be last."

This parable is a picture of our lives. Some who serve God from their childhood though they keep the Commandments, do no great work for God. When they die they go to Heaven but they do not get a high place there. Some begin to serve God late in life but they then do much to make up for lost time. Their prayers, penance, and other good works sometimes give them a higher place in Heaven

than they might have had if they had always been only rather good. We see what a great Saint Mary Magdalen became.

Some are converted only on their deathbeds, yet perfect contrition opens Heaven to them as it did to the good thief on the cross. Jesus said to him : " This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise."

The best is to begin from early childhood to love and serve God, and all through life to work for Him with our whole hearts. Then Our Lord will say to us : " Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord."

CHAPTER XV .

THE PRODIGAL SON.

Luke, 15.

A certain man had two sons and the younger asked his father to divide his money and give him his share.

The father did so and very soon the son left his father's house and spent all his money with companions like himself. Then there was famine in the country to which he had gone and soon he was starving. He tried to get work and he was hired by a farmer who sent him to feed swine. In his misery he thought of home and of his father who was so good even to the servants and he said : " I will arise and go to my father and I will say to him, Father I have sinned against Heaven and before thee, I am not now worthy to be called thy son, make me as

one of thy hired servants." He went back and when his father saw him coming he ran to meet him and fell on his neck and kissed him.



His son began : " Father, I have sinned "—but the father, seeing the state in which he was, told the servants to bring clothes and shoes and all that his son needed and to prepare a grand feast to welcome him home.

In this parable Our Lord shows us how ready God is to forgive our sins. Before the son had time to confess he had done wrong his father ran to meet him.

So Our Father in Heaven forgives our sins as soon as we are sorry for them. We are not treated like servants but like dear children, and after Confession the great feast of the Blessed Eucharist is prepared for us, and Jesus Himself has told us that there is joy before the Angels of God upon one sinner doing penance.

CHAPTER XVI

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

John, 10. Luke, 15.

The only parable in St. John's Gospel is that of the Good Shepherd. In it Jesus says He is the Good Shepherd who loves His sheep and is willing to lay down His life for them, not like a hireling who would run away when he saw the wolf coming because he had no love for the sheep. The Good Shepherd knows each of His sheep and they know His voice and follow Him.

Jesus often spoke of Himself as a shepherd and of us as His sheep. After the Resurrection He left us in St. Peter's care saying to him : " Feed my lambs, feed my sheep. "

There are beautiful pictures of the Good Shepherd. In one we see a poor lamb caught in the brambles and the kind shepherd tenderly moving the thorny branches to set it free without hurting it any further. So Jesus delivers us from the power of the devil or of the world.



In another picture the shepherd is carrying the wounded lamb on his shoulders. St. Luke tells us he then says : " Rejoice with me for I have found my sheep that was lost." So Our Lord takes the poor soul wounded by sin, heals it and cleanses it in the Sacrament of Penance, and by Holy Communion gives it strength to remain good.

There is another picture of the shepherd in the fold with the sheep and lambs round Him and the

weakest in his arms. How glad we should be that we are in the fold, that is in the true Church. Our Lord said : " Other sheep I have that are not of this fold." We must pray that they may be brought to it and then there will be one fold and one Shepherd.

CHAPTER XVII

THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

Luke, 10.

A man once asked Jesus : " Master, what must I do to possess eternal life ? " Jesus said : " What is written in the law ? " The man replied : " Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself." And Jesus said : " Thou hast answered right, this do and thou shalt live." But the man asked : " Who is my neighbour ? " Jesus answered by the parable of the Good Samaritan.

A certain man going from Jerusalem to Jericho was attacked by robbers who wounded him, took all he had, and left him half dead. A Jewish priest going that way saw him and passed by. A little later another Jew saw him yet did nothing for him. Then a Samaritan came to the spot and was filled



with pity when he saw the wounded man. He did

not mind the fact that the Jews were not at all friendly with the Samaritans, but delayed his journey to attend to this suffering stranger. He bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, then he put him on the beast he had himself been riding and took him to an inn. He asked the innkeeper to look after the wounded man and gave him some money, saying that if it were not enough to get what was needed he would give him more on his return. Then Jesus asked : "Which of these three was neighbour to him that fell among robbers ?" The man answered : "He that showed mercy to him." Jesus said : "thou and do likewise."

CHAPTER XVIII

OUR LORD'S FIRST MIRACLE.

John, 10.

In the last few chapters we have been studying some of Our Lord's words and the lessons He taught in parables. Now we shall learn about the miracles He wrought. A miracle is something that cannot happen naturally, but with God all things are possible.

Jesus worked His first miracle because His Blessed Mother asked it and to do an act of kindness to some poor people.

There was a wedding at Cana in Galilee and Jesus and Mary were present. The people must have been poor, for they had not enough wine. Mary noticed it and said to Jesus : "They have no wine."

Jesus answered that the time for working miracles had not come. But Mary knowing the kindness of her Son's heart said to the servants: "Whatever He shall say to you do ye."



Then Jesus told them to fill six empty jars with water. They did so, and when they began to draw it out they found that the water they had poured in had been changed into wine. Jesus told them to take it to the chief steward, that is the man who was in charge of the feast. He did not know where the wine had come from so he called the bridegroom and said that good wine is always given first, but this had been kept for the end of the feast. These two men did not know at the time that the water had been changed into wine, but those who were near Jesus and Mary knew that a miracle had been worked and many on account of it believed in Jesus.

CHAPTER XIX

CHRIST FEEDS FIVE THOUSAND IN THE DESERT.

Matt., 14. Luke, 11. John, 6.

When the Apostles returned from preaching and working miracles they were full of joy and told Jesus all they had done. He said to them : "Come into the desert and rest awhile." But the people followed them in crowds. When it was evening Jesus told the Apostles to give the people to eat. They said they had only five loaves and two fishes, and they asked if they could go into the village and buy food. But Jesus said : "Make the men sit down." They made them sit on the grass in fifties so they knew how many were fed.



Jesus took the bread and fishes and blessed them and gave them to the disciples. They went round giving the people as much as they wanted.

When all were satisfied Jesus said : "Gather up the fragments that remain lest they be lost." And they filled twelve baskets with what remained of the five loaves and two fishes after five thousand people had eaten as much as they liked. When the people saw this wonder they wished to make Jesus their King, but Jesus hid from them. He made the Apostles get into the boat and go over to the other side of the lake while He went up to the mountain alone to pray. He often spent the night in prayer.

St. Mark relates another miracle like this one.

Four thousand people had been following Our Lord for three days and had nothing to eat. Jesus said : "If I send them away fasting to their home they will faint on the way." And He fed them with seven loaves and a few fishes which the Apostles had brought with them. After the crowds had eaten the disciples filled seven baskets with the bits that were left.

CHAPTER XX

JESUS WALKS ON THE WATERS. THE STORM AT SEA.

John, 6. Matt., 14. Mark, 4. Luke, 8.

When the Jews saw the power and goodness which led Jesus to work a miracle in order to feed the hungry people, they wished to make Him their King. But Jesus did not wish it, so He sent His Apostles to the boat and told them to go to the other side of the lake ; then He dismissed the people, and went alone to pray. The disciples were trying to get quickly to the shore as they saw a storm was coming on but the wind was against them. The night grew

dark, the wind rose, and the boat was tossed on the waves. Suddenly they saw Jesus coming to them walking on the water, and they were very much afraid. He said to them : " It is I, be not afraid. " Peter called out : " Lord, if be thou, bid me come to thee on the water. " Jesus said : " Come. " Peter got out of the boat and walked on the waters, but the wind became strong and the waves rose, and he began to fear, and he cried out : " Lord, save me. " Jesus stretching out His hand took hold of him and said : " Why didst thou doubt, O thou of little faith ? " Then they walked together on the water and when they were in the boat the wind ceased. Those who were in the boat came and adored Our Lord and said : " Indeed thou art the Son of God. "



Another time when the disciples were in the boat with Jesus, He was so tired that He fell asleep. A great tempest arose and the waves dashed over the boat. The terrified disciples awoke Jesus, saying : " Lord, save us, we perish. " Jesus said : " Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith ? " Then rising up He commanded the wind and the sea and there came a great calm.

When all were satisfied Jesus said : "Gather up the fragments that remain lest they be lost." And they filled twelve baskets with what remained of the five loaves and two fishes after five thousand people had eaten as much as they liked. When the people saw this wonder they wished to make Jesus their King, but Jesus hid from them. He made the Apostles get into the boat and go over to the other side of the lake while He went up to the mountain alone to pray. He often spent the night in prayer.

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JESUS WALKS ON THE WATERS. THE STORM AT SEA.

John, 6. Matt., 14. Mark, 4. Luke, 8.

When the Jews saw the power and goodness which led Jesus to work a miracle in order to feed the hungry people, they wished to make Him their King. But Jesus did not wish it, so He sent His Apostles to the boat and told them to go to the other side of the lake ; then He dismissed the people, and went alone to pray. The disciples were trying to get quickly to the shore as they saw a storm was coming on but the wind was against them. The night grew

dark, the wind rose, and the boat was tossed on the waves. Suddenly they saw Jesus coming to them walking on the water, and they were very much afraid. He said to them : " It is I, be not afraid. " Peter called out : " Lord, if be thou, bid me come to thee on the water. " Jesus said : " Come. " Peter got out of the boat and walked on the waters, but the wind became strong and the waves rose, and he began to fear, and he cried out : " Lord, save me. " Jesus stretching out His hand took hold of him and said : " Why didst thou doubt, O thou of little faith ? " Then they walked together on the water and when they were in the boat the wind ceased. Those who were in the boat came and adored Our Lord and said : " Indeed thou art the Son of God. "



Another time when the disciples were in the boat with Jesus, He was so tired that He fell asleep. A great tempest arose and the waves dashed over the boat. The terrified disciples awoke Jesus, saying : " Lord, save us, we perish. " Jesus said : " Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith ? " Then rising up He commanded the wind and the sea and there came a great calm.

And all wondered saying : " Who is this that the wind and the sea obey him ? "

CHAPTER XXI

CURE OF THE BLIND MEN.

Luke, 18. John, 9.

A blind man who was begging on the roadside heard a great noise round him and asked what it meant. He was told that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. He cried out : " Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. "



The people tried to make him keep quiet but he called out louder : " Son of David, have mercy on me. " Jesus sent for him and asked him what he wanted and he answered : " Lord, that I may see. " And Jesus said to him : " Receive thy sight, thy faith hath made thee whole. " And immediately he

saw and followed Jesus. And all the people gave praise and glory to God.

Another beggar who was born blind was told by Our Lord to go and wash his eyes in a pool of water. He did so and was able to see. Everyone was so astonished that they could not believe he was the well-known blind beggar but he said : " I am he. Jesus told me to go to the pool and wash. I went, I washed, and I see." The Scribes and Pharisees were angry at the honour done to Jesus. But the blind man said : " Never from the beginning of the world has it been heard that a man opened the eyes of one born blind. This man unless he was from God could not have done it." They said angrily : " Go and be his disciple, we are the disciples of Moses."

Jesus heard that they had cast him out so He found him and said : " Dost thou believe in the Son of God ?" The man asked who He was and Jesus said : " I am He." The man said : " I believe, Lord." And falling down he adored Him.

Another time two blind men followed Our Lord crying : " Have mercy on us." Jesus said : " Do you believe that I can do this to you ?" They said they did believe. Then Jesus touched their eyes saying : " According to your faith be it done to you." And they were cured immediately.

CHAPTER XXII

THE PROBATICA POND. THE MAN SICK OF THE Palsy.

John, 5. Matt., 9. Mark, 2. Luke, 5.

A great number of blind, lame, and sick persons lay round a pond at Jerusalem waiting for the

moving of the water. Now and again an Angel came down and moved the water and whoever went in first was cured of whatever disease he had. Our Lord saw a man lying there who had been ill for thirty-eight years and He asked him if he wished to be cured. The man answered: "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pond, for while I am coming another goes down before me." Jesus said: "Arise, take up thy bed, and walk." The man rose up cured and Jesus said to him: "Sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee." This man was paralysed, that is he could not move nor help himself in any way.

There was another paralytic but he had kind friends. Four of them carried him in his bed to take him to Jesus. When they reached the house where He was they found such a crowd that they could not even enter the room. So they carried the sick man up to the roof of the house, removed some of the tiles, and let down the bed before Our Lord. Seeing their faith Jesus said: "Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee."

Some of the Scribes who were present thought Our Lord had said something very wrong as only God can forgive sins. Jesus could see even their most secret thoughts and He said: "What is it that you think in your hearts? Which is easier to say, thy sins are forgiven, or arise, take up thy bed and walk? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins," He said to the sick man: "I say to thee arise, take up thy bed and walk." The man did as he was told and thanked God, and all glorified God and said: "We have seen wonderful things to-day."

CHAPTER XXIII

THE CURE OF THE LEPROSERS.

Mark, 1. Luke, 18.

A poor man covered with leprosy who had heard that Our Lord had cured many sick people by just touching them or by saying a few words came to Jesus and falling on his face before Him begged of Him to cure him. "If thou wilt thou canst make me clean," he cried.

Jesus having pity on him said while stretching out His hand and touching him: "I will, be thou made clean." And the leprosy disappeared.

Full of joy the man went and told everyone how he had been cured. This roused the anger of the Scribes and Pharisees, so Jesus would not go into the city but retired into a desert place, yet the people flocked to Him from all sides.

This miracle was worked at the beginning of Our Lord's public life. Later on when He was going through a town with His disciples He met ten men who were lepers. They kept far away as lepers were not allowed to come near other people, but they cried out: "Jesus, Master, have pity on us." Our Lord told them to go and show themselves to the priests, for whenever a leper was cured he had to show himself to the priests and to offer a gift in thanksgiving.

Though these men were not yet cured they believed in Our Lord and obeyed Him. On the road they saw that the leprosy was healed. One of them when he found he was cured went back glorifying God with a loud voice. He fell at Our Lord's feet giving thanks, and this was a Samaritan. Jesus said: "Were not ten made clean? Where are the

nine. ? There is no one found to return and give glory to God but this stranger." Then He said : "Arise, go thy way, thy faith has made thee whole."

CHAPTER XXIV

THE CENTURION'S SERVANT. THE CANAANITE WOMAN.

Matt., 8. Luke, 7. Matt., 15. Luke, 7.

A Centurion, that is, Captain of a hundred men, had a good servant who was at the point of death. He had heard of the miracles worked by Jesus so he came to Him and asked Him to cure his servant. Jesus said : "I will come and heal him." The Centurion answered : "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof, but only say the word and my servant shall be healed." Jesus turning to those who followed Him said : "Amen, I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel." Then he said to the Centurion : "Go, and as thou hast believed so be it done to thee."

And his servant was cured that same hour.

The Centurion was not a Jew, he had not the true religion, yet he believed Our Lord could cure his servant from a distance. So Jesus said the Israelites did not show so much faith.

A Canaanite woman also showed very great faith and was praised by Our Lord for it. She had come to ask for her daughter's cure, but Jesus told her He had come first of all for the Jews, that they were the chosen children of God, and that in a family the children are fed before the dogs. The woman answered humbly that the little dogs ate the crumbs

that fell from the master's table. Our Lord was so touched by her humility that He said : " O woman, great is thy faith ; be it done to thee as thou wilt." And her daughter was immediately cured.

The disciples had wished to send away the woman but Jesus would not allow it. He was trying her patience and faith, and when He saw how she trusted Him He gave her what she wanted and praised her.

CHAPTER XXV

JESUS RAISES THE DEAD. THE WIDOW'S SON.

THE DAUGHTER OF JAIBUS.

Luke, 7. Matt., 9. Mark, 5.



Jesus went to the city of Naim with His disciples and a great crowd followed him. As they entered the city they saw a dead man being carried out. He was the only son of his mother and she was a widow.

Jesus was moved with pity and said to her : " Weep not." He came near and touched the bier and they that carried it stood still. Then He said to the dead man : " Young man, I say to thee, arise." And he that was dead sat up and Jesus gave him to his mother.

All were astonished and afraid and they said : " A great prophet has risen among us and God has visited His people."

A man named Jairus begged of Jesus to come to his house for he had a daughter about twelve years old and she was dying. While he was speaking to Our Lord a messenger came to tell him that the girl was dead. But Jesus said : " Fear not, believe only, and she shall be safe."

When they came to the house they found a crowd round it and some were crying loudly. Jesus told the father to send them all out of the room as the child was not dead but asleep. They laughed at Him but all were sent out. Jesus took only the father and mother of the girl, and Peter, James and John with Him into the room and going up to the girl He took her by the hand and said : " Maid, arise." Immediately the girl sat up and He told the parents to give her something to eat. Although Jesus told them to keep the miracle a secret, everyone in the city was talking about it.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

Math., 17. Mark, 9. Luke, 59.

St. Peter, St. James and St. John were to see Our Lord weak, suffering and afraid in the Garden of Olives and, as if to prepare them for that sight, they saw Him in His glory on Mount Thabor. He had

taken them there to pray and whilst He was praying He suddenly became glorious before their eyes. His face shone like the sun and His garments became white and glittering.



Moses and Elias appeared talking with Him and they spoke of His sufferings and death in Jerusalem. When St. Peter saw his dear Master's glory he cried out "Lord, it is good to be here!" A bright cloud covered them and a voice came out of the cloud saying : "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him." The disciples fell upon their faces for they were very much afraid. Jesus came and touched them and said : "Arise, and fear not." Looking up they saw only Jesus. As they came down the mountain Jesus said to them : "Tell the vision to no man till the Son of Man be risen from the dead."

Twice a voice from Heaven declared Jesus to be the Son of God, first at His Baptism and again now at

His Transfiguration. This feast is kept on the 6th of August. Again the voice spoke a few days before Our Lord's death. A great crowd was round Him and He said : " Father, glorify Thy name." And a voice from Heaven said : " I have glorified it and will glorify it again." Some said an Angel spoke and others said it thundered. We learn from this that the same religious teaching is to some whose hearts are right as a voice from Heaven, and to others who do not care for holy things it is an unmeaning sound like thunder.

CHAPTER XXVII
ON THE LAST JUDGMENT.
Matt., 24.

One day the Apostles asked Our Lord to tell them when the end of the world would be and He said that of that day and hour only God knew, no one else, not even the Angels in Heaven. Then He said : " Be you ready, and what I say to you I say to all, watch."

Jesus told them He would come in His majesty and His Angels with Him, and all the people that ever lived would be gathered before Him, and He would separate them as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, the sheep on the right hand and the goats on the left. Then He shall say to those on the right : " Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world for I was hungry and you gave me to eat ; thirsty, and you gave me to drink ; naked, and you covered me ; a stranger, and you took me in ; sick, and you visited me ; in prison, and you came to me." And they will ask in surprise : Lord, when did we see Thee hungry or thirsty, naked or a stranger, sick or in prison and help Thee ? " And the King will say : " Amen, I say

to you as long as you did it to the least of mine you did it to me." Then He will remind those on the left hand that they had done none of these acts of charity to their neighbour so they had refused them to Him, and He will say to them those terrible words : " Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels." We learn from these two sentences that Heaven was prepared for us, but hell for the devils.

Jesus had said that if we wished to go to Heaven we should love God with our whole heart and our neighbour as ourselves. Now in the description of the Last Judgment He shows how great a virtue charity is " Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy." Charity obtains for us the grace of contrition and so opens Heaven to us.

CHAPTER XXVIII

JESUS RAISES LAZARUS FROM THE GRAVE.

John, 11.

Among Our Lord's most faithful friends were a man named Lazarus and his sisters, Martha and Mary Magdalen. Lazarus fell ill and his sisters sent Jesus this message " Lord, He whom Thou lovest is sick." Jesus told His disciples that this sickness would give glory to God. Two days later He said : " Lazarus is dead, and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there." The disciples did not wish Jesus to return to Judea for fear of the Jews, but when they found He meant to go St. Thomas said : " Let us also go that we may die with Him."

When they reached Bethany Lazarus had been in the grave four days. Many Jews had come from Jerusalem to comfort Martha and Mary. As soon as

Martha heard that Jesus was near she went to meet Him and her first words to Him were: "Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died." Jesus said: "I am the resurrection and the life. Believest thou this?" She answered: "Lord, I have believed that thou art Christ the Son of the living God."

Then she went back to the house and said to her sister: "The Master is here and calleth for thee." Mary went quickly to Jesus and falling at His feet said: "Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died."

When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who were with her weeping He too wept. And the Jews said: "Behold how He loved him." Our Lord asked to be taken to the tomb and when He came to it He told them to remove the stone that closed it.



Martha tried to prevent this, reminding Jesus that her brother had been four days in the grave. Jesus said to her: "Did I not say that if thou believe

thou shalt see the glory of God ? " They took away the stone and after praying Jesus cried out with a loud voice : " Lazarus, come forth. " And he that had been dead came out of the grave wrapped up in a winding sheet. Jesus said : " Loose him and let him go. "

Many of the Jews who saw this wonderful miracle believed in Jesus.

CHAPTER XXIX

JESUS DRIVES THE BUYERS AND SELLERS OUT OF THE TEMPLE.

Matt., 21. Luke, 19. Mark, 11.

We call the eighteen years spent at Nazareth the hidden life of Jesus, and the three years during which He went about Judea preaching the Gospel and working miracles, His public life. He went each year to Jerusalem to keep up the feast of the Pasch. The first year when He entered the Temple He found men selling oxen, and sheep, and doves in the very courts of the Temple. There too were the tables of the money changers who gave Temple money for Roman coins as the pagan money was not used for religious purposes. Jesus was angry at seeing all this buying and selling and bargaining going on in the Temple, so He took a little scourge and whipped them all out of the place. He was more gentle to the sellers of doves for they were poor. He told them to take their cages away and not make His Father's House a place of traffic.

Two years later, a little before His death, Jesus again went to the Temple at the Pasch. He found that the men who bought and sold had not minded His first correction and this time He was more severe even with the dove-sellers. He said : " My House is a house of prayer and you have made it a den of thieves. "

Then He drove them out of the Temple and overturned the tables and let the money roll on the ground.

If our dear Lord, so kind and gentle, was angry with those who showed disrespect in the Temple, what does He feel when Catholics are wanting in reverence in our Churches? The Temple was the house of prayer but the Church is the House of God, for Jesus dwells on its Altar.

CHAPTER XXX

PALM SUNDAY. ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.

Matt., 21. Mark, 11. Luke, 19. John, 12.

That most wonderful miracle, the raising of Lazarus from the dead, caused everyone to speak about the great Prophet, Jesus of Nazareth.



Jerusalem was crowded with people who had come there to celebrate the feast of the Pasch, and

when they heard that Jesus was coming they went to meet Him waving palm branches and calling out: "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Jesus riding on an ass entered the city and the crowds ran forward and cast their garments on the road to make a carpet for Him to ride on. The children cried out: "Hosanna to the Son of David." The Pharisees and Scribes tried to stop these shouts and signs of joy but the people were too excited to mind them, and Our Lord's entry into Jerusalem less than a week before His death was a great triumph. Jesus knew all that would happen in that same city the following Friday and His heart was sad. He wept over Jerusalem and the poor Jews, God's chosen people, who in a few days would commit the terrible crime of crucifying their Saviour.

On entering the city Jesus went to the Temple but in the evening He returned to Bethania. Next morning He came back to Jerusalem and He spent the next few days teaching the crowds who came to hear him.

He spoke of the last Judgment and the signs that would come before the end of the world. The sun will be darkened and the moon will give no light and the stars will fall, and on earth men will wither away for fear of what will come upon the whole world. Then they shall see the sign of the Son of Man in the heavens and He will come in the clouds with great power and majesty. An Angel will gather all men together to be judged. "But when these things come to pass," Our Lord added, "look up and lift up your heads for your redemption is at hand. Watch, for you know not the day nor the hour when your Lord will come."

CHAPTER XXXI

THE LAST SUPPER.

Matt., 26. Mark, 14. Luke, 22. John, 13.

On Wednesday in Holy Week the traitor Judas went to the Scribes and Pharisees and asked them what they would give Him if he betrayed Jesus to them. They promised him thirty pieces of silver. Judas knew that Jesus often spent the night in prayer in the Garden of Olives and he offered to lead the enemies of his Master to the spot so that they could easily take Him prisoner.



On Thursday Jesus went with the twelve Apostles to Jerusalem to eat the Paschal Supper and when

they were at table Jesus said : " One of you is about to betray me. " The Apostles were troubled and each one asked : " Is it I, Lord ? " Judas too dared to ask the question and Jesus answered : " Thou hast said it. " He must have spoken in a low tone but His gentleness did not touch the traitor. When supper was done Jesus rose from table, poured water into a basin and washed the feet of His disciples. Peter said : " Thou shalt never wash my feet. " But afterwards he allowed Jesus to do as He willed. Then Jesus said : " You called me Lord and Master and you say well for so I am, I have given you an example that as I have done you do also. " He meant we should do acts of humility and charity to others.

When they were again seated at table Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it and gave it to His disciples and said : " Take ye and eat. This is my body. " In like manner taking the chalice in His holy hands He prayed and gave it to them saying : " Drink ye all of this. This is my blood of the new testament which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins. " Then He made the Apostles Priests and gave them power to say Mass and told them to do it in memory of Him.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN.

Matt., 26. Mark, 4. Luke, 22.

When supper was done Jesus spoke for some time to His dear disciples to prepare them for what was about to happen. He told them He was going to leave them and Peter asked : " Why cannot I

follow Thee ? I will lay down my life for Thee." The others said the same but Jesus warned them that they would all forsake Him and that before the cock crowed Peter would deny Him three times. The disciples were sad and frightened and when Jesus Himself said : "My soul is sorrowful even unto death," they did not know what to say or do. He went with them to the Garden of Olives and when they entered it He told eight of them to sit there while He went further with Peter, James, and John.



These three He told to watch and pray and going a short distance He fell on the ground and cried : "Father, if it be possible let this chalice pass from me yet not my will but Thine be done." His agony was so great that His sweat became as drops of blood trickling down to the ground. Twice He went to

the three disciples but He found them asleep. He awoke them saying : " Could you not watch one hour with me ? Pray lest you enter into temptation." He went back to pray and being in an agony He prayed the longer.

An Angel was sent from Heaven to comfort Him. Then He rose and went back to the disciples for He knew that Judas was near. Judas had received a band of soldiers from the chief priests and the Pharisees and he had given them a sign : " Whomsoever I shall kiss that is He, hold Him fast." Going up to Jesus he said : " Hail, Rabbi," and kissed Him. Jesus said, " Friend, whereto art thou come ? Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss ?" Then the soldiers surrounded Him and the disciples all fled. And the soldiers laying hands on our Saviour bound Him with ropes and led Him away.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE PASSION OF JESUS. JESUS BEFORE THE HIGH PRIEST.

Matt., 26. Mark, 14. Luke, 22.

Late at night the soldiers dragged Jesus from the Garden of Olives through the streets of Jerusalem to the house of the High Priest. The Scribes and Pharisees, the priests and doctors of the law gathered together and tried to get false witnesses to say something about our divine Lord that they might have an excuse for putting Him to death. But what could any one say against Him ? Then the High Priest asked Jesus many questions about what He had taught the people, and He answered : " I have spoken openly,

ask them who have heard me." A servant standing by struck Jesus a blow in the face for answering the High Priest so, but Jesus replied gently that He had said nothing wrong. Many false witnesses accused Our Lord but they could not agree among themselves.

At last the High Priest asked Jesus by the living God to say if He were the Son of God and Jesus said: "I am, and you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of God." Then the High Priest pretended that Jesus had blasphemed and that He deserved to die. In the meantime Peter and another disciple had entered the court and one of the maid-servants asked Peter if he were not one of Our Lord's disciples. Peter said he did not even know Jesus. A little later two others asked the same question and Peter denied again and again. After the third denial Jesus turned and looked at Peter. Just then the cock crew and Peter remembered what Our Lord had said, and going out he wept bitterly.

Jesus was then left till morning to the soldiers and servants and they mocked Him and blindfolded Him and struck Him and said: "Prophecy, who is it that struck Thee?" And they spat in His face.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE PASSION OF JESUS. AT THE COURTS OF PILATE AND HEROD.

Matt., 27. Mark, 15. Luke, 23. John 18.

When morning came Jesus was taken to the Roman governor Pilate. The governor asked what Jesus had done and the priests answered that they would not have brought Him to be tried if they

had not found Him guilty. Yet after much questioning Pilate said he could find out nothing for which Jesus should be put to death. The Jews said that Jesus was trying to turn the people against the Roman Emperor, Caesar, first in Galilee and now in Jerusalem. When Pilate heard that Jesus was from Galilee he sent Him to Herod.

With great cruelty Jesus was dragged again through the streets to Herod's place. The King was glad to see Him of whom he had heard so much and wished Him to do something wonderful, to work a miracle before him. He asked Him many questions but Jesus said not one word. Then Herod and his court mocked Him, put a white garment on Him and sent Him back to Pilate. The governor said: "I have examined this man before you and I find no cause in Him: I will chastise Him and let Him go." Over and over again Pilate declared Our Lord innocent yet for fear of the Jews he did not set Him free.

To get out of the difficulty he reminded them that it was the custom to set a prisoner free on the great feast day and he asked: "Will you have this man or Barabbas?" They shouted: "Barabbas." They chose a robber and murderer rather than Jesus. Pilate then asked: "What shall I do with Jesus?" The crowd called out: "Let Him be crucified." Pilate said: "What evil has He done?" But they cried out the more: "Crucify Him, Crucify Him." Then Pilate said: "Take you Him and crucify Him." Sending for water he washed his hands and said: "I am innocent of the blood of this just man look you to it." The people called out: "His blood be upon us and on our children."

CHAPTER XXXV

THE PASSION OF JESUS. THE SCOURGING AND
CROWNING WITH THORNS.*Matt., 17. Mark 15.*

When Pilate said so unjustly : " I will chastise and let Him go," the soldiers took Jesus away and scourged Him most cruelly. The Bible says in three words " They scourged Him," but let us think what these strong, hard men made Our Lord suffer, how they bound Him to a pillar and beat Him with whips until His whole body was torn and bleeding.



The Roman soldiers saw that no one found fault with those who treated Jesus cruelly, that on the

contrary the Scribes and Pharisees, the rich people among the Jews, were pleased at it, so without any orders they too took Jesus after the scourging to an outer court and made a mock king of Him. They made Him sit down, threw an old purple cloak over His shoulders pretending it was a royal mantle, platted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, placed a reed in His hand for a sceptre, then bowing the knee before Him they said: "Hail, King of the Jews." Then spitting on Him they took the reed and struck Him on the head.



When Pilate saw the state Jesus was in, torn by scourges, crowned with thorns, covered with blood, he thought the sight of Him would touch the hardest heart so he brought Him out on the balcony and

said : " Behold the man." The only answer he received was the cry : Crucify him." A week ago the Scribes and Pharisees had said the whole world was going after Jesus and now the whole world is against Him. The Jews mocked Him in the house of the High Priest, the pagan Romans did the same in Pilate's palace, King Herod and His court treated the Son of God as a fool, and Pilate through fear of the Jews who threatened to complain about him to Cæsar condemned Him to a most cruel death.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE PASSION OF JESUS. JESUS CARRIES HIS CROSS TO CALVARY.

Matt., 27. Luke, 23.

As soon as Pilate, the unjust judge, had passed the sentence of death : " Take Him you and crucify Him," Jesus bearing His own cross was led forth on the road to Calvary. It was all uphill and the cross weighed heavily on His wounded, bleeding shoulder. His enemies saw that He could not carry the cross alone so laid hold of Simon of Cyrene and forced him to help Jesus. A great multitude followed, among them were some good women who pitied Our Lord and cried aloud as He passed. But Jesus said to them : " Daughters of Jerusalem, weep

not over me but weep for yourselves and your children."



Jesus had to go to Calvary with two thieves as His companions as His enemies wanted all who saw Him to think that He too had been guilty of some crime,

The traitor, Judas, seeing that Our Lord was really condemned was terrified at what he had done and filled with remorse he went to the chief priests and said: "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood." But they said: "What is that to us? Look you to it." Then Judas cast down those pieces of silver that had tempted him to sin and went and hanged himself.

When Jesus reached the top of Mount Calvary His clothes were again dragged off, thus opening

His wounds, then He was laid on the cross and His hands and feet fastened to it with large nails. At the top of the cross was nailed the title Pilate had ordered to be written, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." Then the cross was raised and Jesus hung on it before those cruel eyes that had been watching the crucifixion. The two thieves were placed one on the right and one on the left.

Close by the Cross stood Mary His Mother with St. John and Magdalen and at a little distance were some pious women who had followed him from Galilee.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE DEATH OF OUR LORD. SEVEN WORDS ON THE CROSS.

Matt., 27. Mark, 15. Luke, 23. John, 19.

Our Saviour hung on the Cross from noon till 3 o'clock and seven times during those long, sad hours He broke the silence that had fallen on Calvary. At first the Scribes and Pharisees had mocked Him, saying : "He saved others, himself he cannot save. Let him come down from the cross and we will believe in him." The people followed the example set them and the thieves joined their voices to the rest. But by degrees it became so dark, though it was mid-day, that most of the people were too frightened to remain on Calvary.



"Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Our Lord's first word was a prayer for His cruel enemies. Both the thieves had at first spoken against Jesus but after a while one was struck by His wonderful patience and when the other said : "If thou be Christ save thyself and us," he rebuked him. Then turning to Jesus he said : "Lord, remember me when thou shalt come into thy Kingdom. Jesus answered : "Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise."

The third word was to His Mother. Jesus looked at her and then at St. John and said : "Woman, behold thy son. Son, behold thy Mother." On Calvary Mary became mother to all of us and she prays for us and watches over us with a mother's love.

It was growing darker and darker and very few of the crowd were left on Calvary. Our Lord's friends remained near the Cross and the soldiers and executioners were waiting for the death of those crucified.

No one can understand the suffering the next word expressed. "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Then He said: "I thirst." How His Mother must have longed to get Him some water! One of the soldiers took a sponge, dipped it in vinegar, fixed it on a reed, and put it to His lips. Then Jesus said: "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." At 3 o'clock He cried out with a loud voice: "It is consummated." The work of our redemption was complete. Our Saviour died for us.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE TAKING DOWN FROM THE CROSS AND THE BURIAL OF JESUS.

Matt., 27. John, 19.

As Jesus died the earth quaked, rocks were rent the graves opened and dead bodies rose and appeared to many in Jerusalem. The beautiful veil of the Temple tore from top to bottom and exposed the Holy of Holies into which none but the High Priest was allowed to enter. The Centurion and many of the soldiers on Calvary were very much afraid and said: "Indeed this was the Son of God."

Jesus died on the eve of the great festival, the Pasch and the Jews wanted Him to be buried before the feast day, so they begged of Pilate to order the legs of those crucified to be broken. This used to be done to hasten death. The soldiers broke the legs of the thieves, but when they came to Jesus they found He was dead. One of them pierced His heart with a spear and blood and water flowed out. Then they were sure He was dead.

In the meantime Joseph of Arimathea had gone to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. He came to Calvary with another disciple, Nicodemus, and together they took the body down from the Cross. Then with His holy Mother, St. John, Magdalen, and the other holy women they wrapped the sacred body in fine linen cloth, put in sweet spices of myrrh and aloes, and laid it in a new sepulchre belonging to Joseph. Then a large stone was rolled against the rock to close the entrance to the grave.

The Body lay there but the soul of Jesus, as the Apostles' Creed teaches us, went as soon as He was dead to hell. Not to the hell of the damned but to that part called Limbo where all the souls of the good who had died since the beginning of the world were waiting for the Saviour to open Heaven to them. There were Saints from the time of the Patriarchs and Prophets who had lived thousands of years before Christ down to St. John Baptist and St. Joseph who had seen and known Him well.



CHAPTER XXXIX

THE RESURRECTION.

Matt., 28. Mark, 16. Luke, 24. John, 20.

Early on Easter Sunday morning Jesus rose glorious from the dead. There was a great earthquake

for an Angel descended from Heaven and rolled back the stone and sat upon it. His face was like lightning and his raiment like snow and for fear of him the guards were struck with terror and became like dead men.



Magdalen and the other pious women had spent Friday night preparing sweet spices to anoint the Body of Jesus and very early before the sun rose Magdalen set out for the tomb. She found it empty and ran back to tell the disciples that the body had been taken away. Peter and John hastened to the tomb and saw for themselves that it was empty but that the linen in which it had been wrapped was still there. They went away but Magdalen remained near the tomb. Again she looked in and saw an Angel sitting there who said to her : " Woman, why weepest thou ? " She answered : " Because they have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him. " Then she saw

someone near her and thought it was the gardener. She asked him if he knew where the body was and He said : " Mary." Immediately she knew it was Jesus and fell at His feet crying : " Rabboni " which means Master. Then He sent her to tell the disciples He had risen from the dead as He had said He would.

The other women also went to the tomb in the early morning. They had brought the spices and were wondering how they would remove that large stone. When they reached the sepulchre they found it open and empty. Two Angels stood by them who said : " Fear not, you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is risen. Remember He said on the third day He would rise again." As these women were running to tell the disciples what they had seen Jesus met them saying : " All Hail." They fell at His feet and adored Him.

CHAPTER XL

THE DISCIPLES GOING TO EMMAUS.

Luke, 24.

Now that Our Lord was dead some of the disciples lost all hope and two of them left Jerusalem. Jesus like a good shepherd joined them and asked them why they were so sad. They were surprised and said he must be a stranger not to know all that had happened in Jerusalem.

Then they told Him how their Master, a prophet mighty in word and work, had three days before been given up by their priests to the Roman governor and by his orders crucified. Jesus then explained to them all that had been written in the Old Testament about Christ, how He had to suffer death and so to enter into His glory. They arrived at the

house and asked Jesus to come in with them. "Stay with us," they said, "because it is towards evening and the day is far spent."

He went in with them and when they were at table He took bread and blessed and broke and gave them, and they knew Him and He vanished out of their sight. Then they said: "Was not our heart burning within us when He spoke on the way?" They went back to Jerusalem and told the disciples all that had happened and that they knew Him in the breaking of bread.

They found the disciples full of joy because Our Lord had appeared to Peter. While they were speaking Jesus stood in their midst and said as usual: "Peace be to you," and seeing they were frightened, He added: "Why are you frightened? It is I, myself, see my hands and my feet, handle and see, for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see me to have." And He showed them His hands and feet and they wondered for joy.

Then He opened their understanding and explained to them that Christ had to suffer and die and rise from the dead, and that the Gospel was to be preached in His name to all nations.

CHAPTER XLI

JESUS APPEARS TO HIS APOSTLES AND DISCIPLES.

John, 20.

Late on Easter Sunday when the disciples were gathered together for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst of them and said: "Peace be to you." He showed them His hands and His side. The disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Again He said: "Peace be with you."

Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain they are retained."

St. Thomas was not with them and when he heard that they had seen the Lord he said: "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side I will not believe."

After eight days again the disciples were together and Thomas with them Jesus came in, the doors being shut, and said: "Peace be to you." Then He said to Thomas: "Put in thy finger hither and see my hands, and bring hither thy hand and put in into my side, and be not faithless but believing." Thomas said: "My Lord and my God."

Jesus said: "Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed."

We do not know anything about Our Lord's apparition to the Blessed Virgin, but no Catholic would doubt for a moment that Jesus appeared first to His Mother.

On Calvary she was the "Queen of Martyrs" and at Easter she became the "Cause of our Joy." The Church stops the Angelus during the whole of the Paschal season and bids us say instead, "Rejoice O Queen of Heaven to see thy Son return in glory from the tomb."

CHAPTER XLII

CHRIST MAKES ST. PETER HEAD OF THE CHURCH.

John, 21.

One morning Peter, James, and John with four other Apostles were in their fishing boat on the lake.

All night long they had caught nothing. Jesus was on the shore waiting for them, but they did not know Him. He asked if they had any fish and when they said no, He told them to cast the net on the right side. They obeyed and caught so many that they could not draw up the net. John said : "It is the Lord." Peter jumped into the sea and went to Jesus. The others came in the boat dragging the net. When they landed the fish, they counted one hundred and fifty-three, yet the net was not broken. Jesus said : "Come and dine." They saw a fire lighted and fish being prepared and some bread, and Jesus gave them to eat.

When they had dined Jesus said to Peter :

"Lovest thou me?"

Peter said : "Lord, thou knowest that I love Thee." Jesus said :

"Feed my lambs."

Again He said : "Simon, lovest thou me?" Again

Peter answered : "Lord, thou knowest that I love Thee." Jesus said

a third time : "Simon,

lovest thou me?" Peter must have thought of His three denials and he said humbly : "Lord, thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee." Jesus said : "Feed my sheep." By these words Jesus made Peter shepherd of His whole flock. The lambs are all the faithful, the sheep that look after the lambs are those who are called, as Priests are, to take care of the souls of others, and the shepherd, the Pope, is in charge of all, the sheep as well as the lambs. Jesus when going to Heaven left Peter to be



head of the Church on earth saying to him : "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, and to thee will I give the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven."

CHAPTER XLIII

THE ASCENSION AND PENTECOST.

Luke, 24. Acts, 1.

Forty days after the Resurrection Jesus took His disciples to Mount Olivet. He told them to remain in Jerusalem and wait for the Holy Ghost who would come to them in a few days and then they would preach the Gospel to all men even to the uttermost parts of the earth.



Then lifting up His hands He blessed them, and as He was blessing them He rose up to Heaven and

a cloud received Him out of their sight. Then two Angels appeared who said : " Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to Heaven ? This Jesus who is taken up from you into Heaven shall so come as you have seen Him going into Heaven." This was on Ascension Thursday. Then they returned to Jerusalem and remained in prayer with Mary, the Mother of Jesus and the other holy women. Ten days after, on Pentecost Sunday, suddenly there came a sound as of a mighty wind and it filled the whole



house. And there appeared to them parted tongues as of fire and sat upon every one of them. They were filled with the Holy Ghost and they began to speak in different languages.

The Apostles were no longer afraid. They went out and began preaching about Christ, and the crowds that heard them were astonished that these poor Galileans could speak so many languages. Men

were there not only from different parts of Judea but even from Egypt and Rome. Peter said to them : " Hear these words : Jesus of Nazareth whom you by the hands of wicked men have crucified and slain, God has raised up, of which we are witnesses. " When they heard him they had sorrow in their hearts and said to the Apostles : " What shall we do ? " Peter said : " Do penance and be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ. " Three thousand were converted by that first sermon.

CHAPTER XLIV

TRADITION AND THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

All the truths which Our Lord taught are not mentioned in the Bible. St. John says at the end of his Gospel : " Many other things Jesus did which are not written in this book, for if they were written every one the world would not be able to contain the books that would have to be written. " The Apostles had been witnesses of the doings of Jesus ; they had heard His teaching. They spoke of all this to the early Christians ; these in their turn related what they had heard to their families and companions. Many early writers mentioned these truths in their writings and in this way we also came to hear about them. All the truths we learned in this way make up what is called the Tradition of the Church. The Church tells us these truths revealed by Our Lord and contained in Tradition, though the Bible does not mention them expressly.

We learn much of the early Church after the Ascension to the year 63 from the Acts of the Apostles written by St. Luke. He tells us that the two Apostles

named James were martyred. From Tradition we know that all the other Apostles were submitted to torture. St. Peter and St. Andrew were crucified, St. Paul was beheaded, St. John was thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil but did not die under torture. He lived till he was very old. He was banished to the island of Patmos and there he had a vision of Heaven and was shown among other things all that would happen at the end of the world. These visions are related in the Apocalypse or Book of Revelations.

Some apparitions of Our Lord after His Resurrection are mentioned in the Bible. From Tradition we learn that He appeared first to Our Blessed Lady. In his first Epistle to the Corinthians St. Paul tells us that Jesus was first seen by Peter, then by five hundred together, then by James.

The Church was founded on Pentecost Sunday and then the Apostles went to different parts of the world. St. Peter went to Antioch where the disciples were first called Christians. Then he went to Rome and ever since the Pope has, except for a short time, lived in Rome.

CHAPTER XLV

THE FIRST MARTYR.

Acts, 6, 7.

The Apostles appointed seven Deacons to look after the wants of the Christians while they preached the Gospel and instructed those who were to be baptised. One of these Deacons, St. Stephen, converted so many by word and example that the Scribes had him brought before the Council to answer false

witnesses who accused him of saying that Jesus of Nazareth would destroy their city and change the law Moses had given them. Then Stephen spoke and all looking at him saw his face like the face of an Angel.

He reminded them of all that God had done for them since the call of Abraham, how He had delivered them from Egypt, how Moses had led them through the Red Sea and had for forty years worked wonders in the desert, and how even there they had made a golden calf and had offered sacrifice to the idol. Then he told them plainly that as their fathers had done to the prophets they had done to Jesus Christ. Looking up to Heaven he said: "Behold I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God."



Crying out loudly they stopped their ears and ran upon him and drove him out of the city to be stoned to death. When they were stoning him he said: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then falling on his knees he cried with a loud voice: "Lord, lay

not this sin to their charge." When he said this he fell dead. His dying prayer was heard for at least one of his enemies, a young man named Saul, who for some time after continued his persecution of the Christians, but being converted by a miracle became the great St. Paul.

CHAPTER XLVI

MIRACLES WORKED BY ST. PETER.

Acts, 3—9.

Our Lord just before His Ascension said to the Apostles: "Go and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." He gave them the power of working miracles that they might convince the world of the truth of their teaching.



One day St. Peter and St. John went to the Temple and at the gate they met a lame beggar. Peter said to him: "Silver and gold I have none, but

what I have I give to thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth arise and walk." The lame man sprang up and followed them into the Temple leaping and praising God. Seeing the amazement of the people Peter spoke to them of Jesus whom they had crucified and who had risen from the dead. Just then the priests and the officer of the Temple came in and they were angry that Peter spoke of the Resurrection. They ordered him and John to be thrown into prison.

The next day Annas, Caiphas, and the other priests met together and said: "What shall we do with these men? A miracle has been worked by them and it is known to all Jerusalem, we cannot deny it. Let us threaten these men." Sending for Peter and John they forbade them to speak in the name of Jesus, but they answered: "Is it just that we hear you rather than God?" The priests were afraid to do anything to them so they let them go. After this miracle the number of Christians became five thousand.

Peter even raised the dead. A charitable woman named Tabitha, or Dorcas, died, and the poor came weeping to Peter and showed him the clothes Dorcas had made for them. Kneeling by the body Peter prayed and then said: "Tabitha, arise." She opened her eyes and sat up and Peter restored her to her friends.

CHAPTER XLVII

CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL.

Acts, 9.

Saul was sent to Damascus by the High Priest to make prisoners of the Christians he found there

and bring them back to Jerusalem. On the journey he was suddenly surrounded by a bright light and he heard a voice saying : " Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ? " And he said : " Who art thou, Lord ? " And the voice answered : " I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. " And Saul said : " Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ? " The voice answered : " Go into the city and there it will be told to thee what thou must do. " All Saul's companions heard indeed the voice but saw nothing. When Saul rose from the ground he was blind and had to be led into the city.



There was in Damascus a Christian named Ananias and he had a vision in which God told him to go to a certain street and house where he would find Saul in prayer. Ananias said he had heard about this Saul how he had illtreated the Christians in Jerusalem and how he had been sent to Damascus to take them back as prisoners. God told Ananias not to fear for He had chosen this enemy of the Church to become a great Apostle to convert the

heathen nations. Ananias went to the house and found Saul and told him that the Lord Jesus who had appeared to him on the journey would restore his sight and send the Holy Ghost on him. Immediately Saul received his sight and was baptised. He remained for some days with the disciples at Damascus and preached in the synagogue that Jesus was the Son of God. The Jews were astonished for they knew he had been sent to persecute the Christians, but when they found he was really a disciple of Christ they wanted to kill him. Saul escaped and went to Jerusalem. One of the disciples took him to the Apostles and told them how Jesus had appeared to him on the road and how he had been with the Christians at Damascus.

Later on Saul went from country to country preaching the Gospel. He changed his name to Paul and we know him as St. Paul, the great Apostle of the Gentiles, those who did not belong to the Jewish religion.

CHAPTER XLVIII

ST. PETER IN PRISON AND DELIVERED BY AN

ANGEL.

Acts, 12.

Herod had ordered St. James, the brother of St. John, to be put to death and seeing that it pleased the Jews he threw St. Peter into prison. It was the feast of the pasch so he ordered a very strict guard

to be kept over him till after the feast. But the whole Church was praying for him and on the eve of the day when he was to be brought before Herod, Peter bound in chains was asleep between two soldiers and two others were guarding the door. Suddenly a bright light shone round him and an Angel awoke and told him to rise. As he did so the chains fell off and dressing quickly he followed the Angel. They passed through the prison without being seen or heard and came to the great iron gate of the city which opened of itself. The Angel went with Peter down one street and then left him.

Peter awoke as if from a dream and said: "Now I know in very deed that the Lord has sent His Angel to deliver me from Herod." He thought it best to go to a house where many of the disciples were gathered together. He knocked and a girl came to the door, but when she heard Peter's voice she ran back to the house to tell them that he was at the gate. They said she was mad but she declared he was there. Then some said: "It is his Angel." They opened the door and were filled with joy and astonishment to see Peter. He called for silence and told them how he had been delivered from prison by an Angel and he asked them to repeat all he had said to the other Apostles. Then he went away to another place.

The next day there was no small stir in the prison as to what had become of Peter. Herod after ordering the jailors and soldiers to be put to death left Judea and went to another part of his Kingdom.

Peter went back to his work of preaching the Gospel and doing good to all and governed the

Church for more than twenty years after his imprisonment.



